

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00537 241417Z

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ACTION VOE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9644

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 0537

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, AR, MX, VE

SUBJ: NON-RESIDENT VISA APPLICANTS

REF: A. MEXICO 0173 (NOTAL)

B. CARACAS 0676 (NOTAL)

1. WE REGRET THAT A COMBINATION OF STAFF SHORTAGE ON TOP OF A RECENT UNEXPECTED SHARP INCREASE IN NIV APPLICATIONS HERE HAS PREVENTED US FROM ISSUING NIV'S ON WALK-IN WALK-OUT BASIS FOR PAST MONTH, AND THAT SOME OF OVERFLOW HAS FOUND ITS WAY TO YOUR DOORS. FOR SEVERL WEEKS, WE TURNED AWAY APPLICANTS WHO EXCEEDED OUR DAILY CAPACITY, BUT MORE RECENTLY HAVE GIVEN THEM APPOINTMENTS FOR FUTURE INTERVIEWS. AS OF TODAY, APPOINTMENTS FOR B-2 APPLICANTS EXTEND AS FAR/AHEAD AS FEB 19.

2. POST CAN BE ASSURED IT HAS NEVER BEEN OUR POLICY TO SUGGEST TO OUR EXCESS APPLICANTS THAT THEY APPLY ELSEWHERE. WE HAVE REINSTRUCTED ALL STAFF MEMBERS IN THIS REGARD. IT IS POSSIBLE HOWEVER THAT SOME APPLICANTS ASKED WHETHER THEY COULD APPLY ELSEWHERE, WERE ADVISED THERE NO LEGAL OBSTACLE TO THIS BUT WERE TOLD THAT THERE NO GUARANTEE THAT THEIR APPLICATIONS WOULD BE ACCEPTED OUTSIDE CONSULAR DISTRICT OF THEIR RESIDENCE.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 00537 241417Z

3. BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HERE AND GENERALLY

AGREEABLE LIFE STYLE IN ARGENTINA, WE FIND GREAT PROPORTION OF B-2 APPLICANTS, SOME 95 PERCENT, TO BE BONA FIDE NONIMMIGRANTS. WE BELIEVE VAST MAJORITY OF ARGENTINES APPLYING FOR NIV'S OUTSIDE ARGENTINA DURING PAST MONTH ARE DOING SO SIMPLY BECAUSE OF DELAYS THEY EXPERIENCING HERE IN HAVING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AND NOT BECAUSE THEY ATTEMPTING TO EVADE OUR SCREENING. WE THEREFORE WILLING TO WAIVE, FOR TIME BEING, SAY NEXT 3 MONTHS, ANY VISAS ALPHA VISAS DELTA EXCHANGE FOR BEARERES OF ARGENTINE PASSPORTS APPLYING CARACAS OR MEXICO CITY.

4. FYI, WE BELIEVE RECENT SURGE IN ARGENTINE NIV APPLICATIONS BEGINNING LAST MAY HAS RESULTED FROM FAVORABLE PESO-DOLLAR PARALLEL-MARKET RATE OF EXCHANGE WHICH MAKES VACATION TRIP TO MIAMI VIRTUALLY AS INEXPENSIVE AS VACATION AT ARGENTINE RESORT. OFFICIAL RATE OF EXCHANGE IS 9.93 PESOS PER DOLLAR, AND AIR TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED WITH PESOS AT THAT RATE. IN ADDITION, DOLLARS THEMSELVES ARE AVAILABLE TO TOURISTS GOING TO USA AT ONLY SLIGHTLY HIGHER RATE OF 14 PESOS PER DOLLAR. ON OTHER HAND, "PARALLEL MARKET" RATE IS ABOUT 22 OR 24 PESOS PER DOLLAR, PERMITTING AGREEABLE RECONVERSION OF SPARE DOLLARS BACK INTO PESOS UPON RETURN TO ARGENTINA. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THIS SPREAD IN EXCHANGE RATES WILL CHANGE IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

5. WE HOPE HAVE SITUATION HERE UNDER CONTROL IN FEW MONTHS, PROVIDED ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL REQUESTED OF DEPARTMENT ARE FORTHCOMING.

6. FOR CARACAS: WE ARE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR MAKING CONSUL SANCHEZ AVAILABLE ON TDY TO HELP US OUT DURING THIS CRITICAL PERIOD. WE UNDERSTAND FULLY WHAT INCONVENIENCE THIS BRINGS YOU AS WE TOO ARE SUFFERING FROM LONG LINES OF NIV APPLICANTS AND TOURIST AGENCIES (WHO BEGIN LINING UP EVENING BEFORE) FROM PAPERWORK BACKLOGS AND FROM DISRUPTION OF WORK OF UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BUENOS 00537 241417Z

ALL ELEMENTS FO MISSION BY REQUESTS FOR VISA SERVICES BY INFLUENTIAL PERSONS OUTSIDE WHO CAN NOT BE IGNORED. ACCORDINGLY, WE ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

7. FOR MEXICO: WE HAVE INFORMED TRAVEL AGENCY ASSOCIATION AS YOU SUGGEST THAT AGENCIES NOT PLAN FOR CLIENTS TO OBTAIN VISAS AT MEXICO OR ANYWHERE

ELSE OUTSIDE ARGENTINA.

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